

VZCZCXYZ0001  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHVL #0630 3291041  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 251041Z NOV 09  
FM AMEMBASSY VILNIUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3912  
INFO RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 2056  
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA PRIORITY 3685  
RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN PRIORITY  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 3825

UNCLAS VILNIUS 000630

SIPDIS

EMBASSY COPENHAGEN FOR REGIONAL ESTH OFFICER  
EMBASSY WARSAW FOR REGIONAL MEDICAL OFFICER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [PREL](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA DECLARES NATIONWIDE FLU PANDEMIC; TWO  
DEATHS SO FAR

REF: VILNIUS 619

¶1. SUMMARY: Lithuania declared a nationwide flu pandemic on November 24 after flu cases reached epidemic levels in nearly two-thirds of the country's 60 municipalities. Lithuania has reported two deaths, both within the past week, from H1N1 flu. The Embassy community recorded its first confirmed case of H1N1 flu on November 23. End summary.

¶2. After 38 of 60 municipalities in Lithuania reported that flu and similar respiratory illnesses had reached epidemic levels locally, Interior Minister Raimundas Palaitis announced that the National Commission for Extreme Situations, which he chairs, had declared a nationwide flu pandemic. The commission has recommended that people avoid large public events. Decisions on school closings are still being made at the local level.

¶3. Lithuania reported its second H1N1 death -- a 40-year-old man in Visaginas -- on November 23. The Infectious Diseases Center reported that about 475 persons across Lithuania were in hospitals Tuesday, with 40 of them in intensive care. Many schools have closed because of high absenteeism, although not all absent children are ill; many parents have kept their children home as a precaution. By the end of last week, 26,000 people were sick with flu or similar respiratory illnesses.

¶4. One American family member of an Embassy employee has a confirmed case of H1N1 flu. Several Embassy employees are off work, but it is unlikely that all are ill; some are probably caring for children who are ill or whose schools have been closed because of the pandemic. Embassy staff are being kept apprised of the flu situation, and reminded to take recommended precautions, such as washing hands frequently. The Embassy has sufficient Tamiflu for all staff members and the family members of American staff. The American International School of Vilnius (AISV), which many Embassy dependents attend, remains open. Absenteeism has been running about 40 percent in recent days, and is heaviest among pupils in grade 5 and below.

¶5. Municipalities with epidemic levels of flu have put their flu action plans into effect. Those plans require local officials to increase the number of medical personnel receiving patients at hospitals, increase the number of telephone lines to accept calls from patients, increase ambulance staffing to provide aid outside of medical facilities, increase work hours as needed for medical facilities and staff, postpone elective surgeries at hospitals, prohibit visitors at hospitals, and make decisions regarding closure of schools or cancellation of large public events.

¶6. Tamiflu and other medicines remain in short supply in pharmacies. New shipments are arriving regularly, but sell out quickly. In accordance with its plans and as the number of patients has climbed, the GOL has distributed some of its stocks of antiviral drugs to hospitals.

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